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UNCLAS MANAGUA 000646

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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CEN, WHA/EPSC, EB,
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TAGS: ETRD NU
SUBJECT: CAFTA LEGISLATION PASSES IN NICARAGUA; GON PUSHING
FOR APRIL EIF

REF: A. MANAGUA 00256

1B. MANAGUA 0026

11. (U) The National Assembly approved remaining CAFTA-DR legislative obligations with March 21 votes for reforms of the Patent Law, the Trademark Law and the Special Law on Crimes against International Commerce or International Investment, and ratification of the Budapest Treaty. These votes came with much larger margins than the Thursday, March 16 votes for reforms to the Copyright Law and the Law for Protection of Satellite Signals and Broadcast Rights, which squeaked through with 48 votes and the required minimum of 47 votes respectively, without opposition.

12. (SBU) Political reconsideration to reengage on the CAFTA votes by the Liberal Party (PLC), which had tried unsuccessfully last week to trade a CAFTA pony for an amnesty jackass, yielded votes between 60 and 74 in favor of the numerous articles associated with the March 21 victory on CAFTA legislation. Neither opposing nor abstaining votes were registered, though a number of deputies) in the mid-teens) were present but did not vote. According to Assembly staffers and AMCHAM President Rene Gonzalez, no organized party tactics were associated with the present but not voting phenomenon. Rather, all sources attributed the voting profile to either &cigarette breaks8or &the PLC,s lack of discipline.⁸ Gonzalez added that the PLC had been &properly shamed⁸ into voting for the remaining CAFTA legislation.

13. (U) MIFIC sources reported to Econoff on March 22 that they had worked through the night to prepare the legislative package for signature and publication today. The package was already at the National Assembly by 9 a.m. on March 22 awaiting signature by Assembly President Eduardo Gomez and First Secretary Maria Auxiliadora Aleman. MIFIC planned to shuttle the package to the Presidency before Noon for President Bolanos, signature and official publication in La Gaceta (the local version of the Federal Register). Econoff reminded MIFIC that to be certified for EIF they also must publish the signed SPS decree on inspection equivalence and any other pending regulations. Mentioned too was the need to resolve quickly the question of compensation for the removal of the pocket and lining concessions.

14. (U) Minister Arguello is aiming to complete all CAFTA requirements by Friday, and pledging to seek certification from the USG next week. He has also "guaranteed" an April

EIF. Minister of Foreign Affairs Norman Caldera repeated previous requests to Ambassador Trivelli on March 21 for an event in Washington celebrating Nicaraguan EIF.

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